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Swift, Morrison Isaac

Some thoughts on the
growing revolution

[Boston?]

[1891?]

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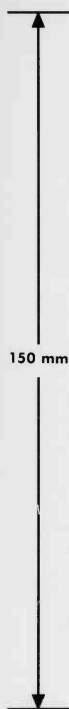
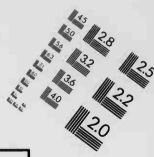
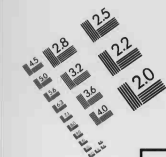
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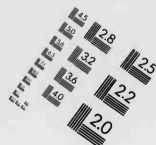
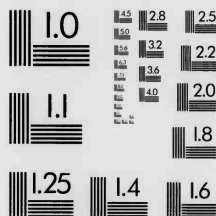
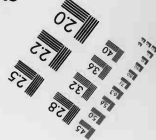
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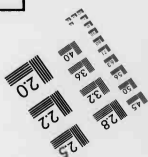
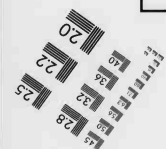
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Box 6

Some Thoughts on the Growing Revolution.

BY MORRISON I. SWIFT.

In a timely paper by one of the most temperate ethical and economic writers, Professor Henry Sidgwick, the morality of strife is critically investigated. * He argues that the time of peace among nations and men is still far in the future. Among individuals 'the growth of sympathetic resentment against wrongs seems not unlikely to cause as much strife as the diminution of mere selfishness prevents, for in a world where most men are still as selfish as now "enthusiasm for humanity," though it will diminish an individual's tendency to fight in his own quarrels, will make him more eager to take part with others who are wronged;' and between nations one convinced that its claim is right must to an important extent be judge in its own cause and cannot feel justified in risking its interests to arbitration.

We are impressed with the Socialistic claims for complete justice for all men and a conception of humanity wide enough to obliterate national interests in an organic world sentiment; but while we dream of this consummation the unyielding fact confronts us that 'most men are still selfish,' and the task of the minority in effecting a social reconstruction seems very great. It is here that the principle entertained by Mr. Sidgwick seems to apply, for the more the humane and enlightened few recognize the blind indomitable compulsion the majority are under from the selfishness of their natures to cohere to their selfish pursuits, and as they comprehend the awful penalties brought down upon the whole race by this obdurate self-seeking, and the keen horrors endured by the weak, the more fearfully urgent and immediate becomes the obligation upon them to circumvent,

* *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. 1 No. 1.

1891?

vanquish and terminate this selfishness and haughty wrong and save mankind from longer havoc thro its curse. Then is their consciousness of weakness greatest, and then also they know that the thing must be done.

It behooves such to consider the relation that physical force bears to progress, for it is not certain that physical force may not be again necessary to achieve this progress. Our whole humanity cries out to the depths in hope that it may not be necessary, but the deeps wing back no answer and we must prepare ourselves for the slow decision of time. Albeit some things we may believe the internal powers have deliberated on and settled, settled after ages of neglect and somnolence, and greatest and best of their decrees is this one, that the inequalities of life are to be stopped, controvened, leveled. If this cannot be done without force it must be done with force, for their continuance cannot by any reason or sophistry be justified.

Do some remind us of the horrors of war, the lives sacrificed, the hates bred, the swift tearing down of good with bad, and the long slow recuperation and the difficulty of even regaining ground apparently lost? Let us give the honest people who chant in this vein something to think about. Why have wars ever been entered on? To terminate a state of suffering in which some section of the race experienced steadily more misery than the war could bring to them and misery not to be removed except by war. War brings on disease and shortens life: so does the way these people are forced to exist. Wars mutilate: so do factories and railroads and mines. But all these horrible injuries are passed quietly by and treated as nothing, tho their amount in each decade far exceeds a war that would cure them.

There is a misplaced sentimentality on this subject. The secret of it is that if war supervened the upper and powerful class with their property would suffer, and now only the lower and weak class suffers and that is of no account. The weak class might continually suffer ten times over what the powerful class would suffer by a war, and the powerful class would denounce the inhumanity of the war and cry down vengeance from heaven upon those villainous ones who made the war to deliver themselves from ten-fold worse. This has been the course of history, a fact to which Mr. Froude has borne striking evidence in the following paragraph from his "Julius Caesar." "Patricians and plebeians, aristocrats and democrats, have alike stained their hands in blood in working out the problem of politics. But

impartial history declares, also, that the crimes of the popular party have in all ages been the lighter in degree, while in themselves they have more to excuse them; and if the violent acts of revolutionists have been held up more conspicuously for condemnation, it has been only because the fate of noblemen and gentlemen has been more impressive to the imagination than the fate of the peasant or artisan. But the endurance of the inequalities of life by the poor is the marvel of human society. When the people complain, said Mirabeau, the people are always right. The popular cause has been the cause of the laborer struggling for a right to live and breathe, and think as a man. Aristocrats fight for wealth and power: wealth which they waste upon luxury and power which they abuse for their own interests."

The people have always been deterred from sweeping away these inequalities fully by the superstition that there was some historic justice in them, a myth that the aristocrats have assiduously fed. They have been taught to believe it impious to strike for equality and freedom, when the impious course was to endure inequality and slavery. Now this superstition has been given up, and the charge of impiety and criminality is reversed, being brought against those who are accountable for the inequalities, who create, enjoy and retain them, the aristocrats, the powerful. It is high time to rid ourselves of this extra respect for aristocracies, whether they be of blood or money. Mr. Goldwin Smith has within a week published these unanswerable words: "It does not seem to me that the British aristocracy, since the days of the first Tudor, from which the present group of families really dates its origin, has done much good either to its own nation or to humanity. Its history appears to me to be an almost unvaried record of class selfishness." * Plainer condemnation could not be spoken. And yet mark: this class, these aristocrats, useless, not paying their way in the world, living by the labor of others, robbing others legally by laws they made, vast social burdens, selfish beyond belief, this class has the power to stamp every effort to throw them off by the beridden race that they plunder, as vicious, inhuman, incendiary, to be crushed out with bullets and bastiles and guillotines. We cannot credit it. We are cer-

* New York Independent, March 19, 1891.

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tain we hear the mighty masses laughing these mad pretensions to scorn; we see the farce of thrones and titles concluded by the hand of the giant Proletarians, and unearned incomes and properties revoked. The hideous false view of life these gentry sustain! Their power to make the right seem wrong and the wrong right! What, in the catechism of humanity, is the first duty of mankind? To remove these aristocrats from power and wealth. What—in the catechism of the aristocracy—is the chief, vilest, and most damnable crime? To take from them a shred or feather-weight or iota of their power to tax, exploit, rob and degrade the rest of us. A singular ethical divergence! and because, as Mr. Froude says, “the fate of nobleman and gentleman has been more impressive to the imagination than the fate of the peasant or artisan,” because aristocrats own the imagination of the press, pulpit, court and law-making body—owning them physically and materially for the most part also—they have made their catechism the generally accepted one, and the worse cause appear the better.

I am not speaking now solely of British aristocrats, in whom I have no especial interest, but of aristocracies in all countries, including aristocrats of wealth. The last faction brings us onto American soil. Continuing his fine and truthful description of the British aristocracy Mr. Goldwin Smith says: “I could only wish to see its political interference on this continent brought to an end, and its efforts to aggrandize itself in this hemisphere confined to marrying American heiresses and speculating in land. Its interventions here have neither been salutary to the inhabitants of this continent nor creditable to itself.....That artificial rank exalts the sentiment of its possessors and lifts them above the sordid selfishness of the vulgar, is the most baseless of fictions.....Unless the spirit of the American people is poorer and lower than well-wishers would willingly believe it to be, the day has dawned in which this continent will be finally set free from European interference and given up without reserve to its own destiny as the home of a new and happier humanity.”

During the Corn-Laws’ agitation in England, Sir Edward Knatchbull, who was a Cabinet minister said, “The duty on corn should be calculated in such a manner as to return to the landed interest full security for their property, and for the station in the country which they had hitherto

held.” * The same Sir Edward Knatchbull spoke of the “peculiar burdens” laid upon the land, which ought to be considered, one of these being the duty of “making provisions for younger children,” wherefore the cheapening of food for the poor thro abolition of the Corn-Laws was “quite impracticable.” † This is the spirit and intelligence of an aristocracy.

We may set ourselves free from the interference of British aristocracy, as we shall doubtless soon effectually and with good consequences do; but we shall then find that all aristocracies are in their essential character the same and that we have been breeding and pampering an endemic aristocracy of our own, an aristocracy of wealth. Our own rich stand to us as the titled aristocrats do to British subjects. Take away the property of all these title-wearers and what would their power be? The inner principle of all aristocracies is a superiority not emanating from the nature of the man, extraneous and therefore artificial. It may be given by rank or money, both spacial attachments, not constituents of character. And both will work out the same results, selfishness and vulgarity. The aristocratic spirit has always been bound up with possessions, which are essential to it. This was true when rank was a far more real thing than it is now. In the *Medea* of Euripides Jason defended himself by saying:

“But to me it seemed
Of great importance that we both might live
As suits ~~of~~ rank, nor suffer abject need,
Well knowing that each friend avoids the poor.”

The substance of aristocracy will go wherever great and unequal possessions go.

The whole past is on the side of aristocracy and unequal possessions, and yet in the light of reason these things are trumpery. They simply annihilate happiness for the majority. They should abdicate but they will not; their genius is absolute dominion. They unwilling must be constrained to abdicate. Let it be a gentle constraint at first, but let these antique injuries be at length utterly out-rooted. This determination of

* Concerning which Mr. M. M. Trumbull (in his “*The American Lesson of the Free Trade Struggle in England*,” p. 75) says: No matter how biting the hunger of the industrious poor might be, the price of bread must be kept so high that the idle, fox-hunting, horse-racing aristocracy might still riot in prodigate extravagance.”

† The same, p. 115.

aristocracy and the selfish power for possession to stay, coupled with the general inertia and superstition of mankind, give rise to the doubt whether strife and the necessity for physical force have yet been transcended. We have had Mr. Bagehot assuring us that "Experience shows how incredibly difficult it is to get men really to encourage the principle of originality. They will admit it in theory, but in practice the old error—the error which arrested a hundred civilizations—returns again. Men are too fond of their own life, too credulous of the completeness of their own ideas, too angry at the pain of new thoughts, to be able to bear easily with a changing existence;" and Henry Maine has dwelt with even greater emphasis upon the relatively small portion of the human race which will so much as tolerate a proposal or attempt to change its usages, laws, and institutions." He declares that "to the fact that the enthusiasm for change is comparatively rare must be added the fact that it is extremely modern. It is known but to a small part of mankind, and to that part but for a short period during a history of incalculable length." *

And yet it is certain that what good mankind has attained has come through change. And by those who would have the fruition for the race of all past efforts to attain infinitely greater good than we have yet reached, the inertia must again be overcome. They must meet this opposition with deliberation, cool resolve and will. The change is worth any effort that may be put forth to gain it; if the opposition is formidable and determined the will to break it down must be formidable and complete. The temper of all present-day reformers must be that displayed by Lincoln in his Peoria speech of 1854. He said: "Slavery is founded in the selfishness of man's nature—opposition to it, in the love of justice. These principles are in eternal antagonism; and when brought into collision as fiercely as slavery extension brings them, shocks and throes and convulsions must follow ceaselessly. Repeal the Missouri Compromise; repeal all compromises; repeal the Declaration of Independence; repeal all past history; you cannot repeal human nature. It will still be in the abundance of man's heart that slavery extension is wrong, and out of the abundance of his heart his mouth will continue to speak." Material inequality is slavery. Justice says,

* *Popular Government*, pp. 132, 134.

abolish this. There will be no peace on earth until inequality is abolished, and there should be no peace. If equality must be bought by bloodshed, let us have bloodshed; let us have riots and rebellions and violent revolutions, *if necessary*. For the reward of these sorrows is worth any price, the reward is human happiness, human freedom, human development. Let us not flinch: wars are deplorable, but there are other evils immeasurably more deplorable. The life we now lead is more deplorable; it is an unutterable shame to us that we consent to lead it; if war and many deaths would lift us higher, out of this death in life, let us welcome war and death.

Revolution—violent revolution, I mean—has many enemies, all doubtless with some thought of the French Revolution. One writes of it in its relation to present movements as follows: "We do need, as you say, a revolution of a certain kind, and yet it may be well to be a little slow about using that word. The revolution which we desire will accomplish the greatest amount of enduring good if it is a gradual and peaceful one. I used to be a great admirer of the French Revolution, but the more I reflect upon it and the more I study history and present social conditions, the more I am inclined to regard it as most unfortunate. The mere fact of the French Revolution is one of the most serious obstacles which social reformers have to encounter to-day. The very mention of it is to the ordinary mind an argument against far reaching social reform. Perhaps you may not have studied carefully the period immediately preceding the French Revolution. There were at that time, it seems to me, in France and elsewhere many good movements, and very promising movements, which might have accomplished far more for us had not the French Revolution interrupted their normal development." It is, to me, a sufficient answer to this argument to reflect how slow all reforms were before the Revolution, and how slow they must have continued to be without the new precedent and encouragement of the Revolution. Men then began to have substantial hopes, to make somewhat adequate demands, and to harbor ideals concerning their possible state that must previously have been unthinkable and undared. Centuries of peaceful "development" would not so effectually have annihilated some of the most injurious political and social superstitions, as did the uprising of the French people in one day. In all our present re-

forms and ideas of reform we are banking on the capital of that event, altho we may think it a great hindrance to the acceptance of our ideas.

The view that Mr. Frederic Harrison has given of this matter seems to me the most philosophical of any. * "The Revolution," as he says, "did not happen in 1789 nor in 1793. The Terror was in '93; the Old System collapsed in '89. But the Revolution is continuing still, violent in France, deep and quiet in England. No one of its problems is completely solved; no one of them is removed from solution; no one of its creations has complete possession of the field. The reconstruction begun more than a hundred years ago is doing still. For they see history upside down who look at the Revolution as a conflagration instead of a reconstruction; or who find in the eighteenth century a suicide instead of finding a birth." Looking at the event thus constructively our business now is to endeavor to conduct this Revolution to maturity and its consummation, and not to be misled into talking of the violent part of it as a misfortune, unless we intend to say that man's nature is a misfortune and the fact that he was not created perfect at the beginning a mistake. We have come up thro wars and revolutions and we had to come up so, being what we were beforehand. It was a sad way to come, but it was better to come that way than not to come at all. If the necessity of wars and revolutions is upon us still as the condition of higher ascensions, sad as the process is let us mount that way in preference to stagnating and dying here. It would have been mere and sheer sentimentality to have opposed war as an instrument of progress in the past, and if hating and opposing war now is to prevent progress now it is still sentimentality. We can hardly decide whether it is so. But being of necessity uncertain we must not set ourselves unconditionally, unreasonably and unreasonably against violent means, nor flinch from them if it becomes apparent that progress still requires them.

Physical force therefore still has a significance and possible utility and function which it is best for us to study critically. Physical force stands in a relation to progress that it is weak to overlook or permit any one to banish from our memories. It signifies resolution. It typifies the state of mind of one who is quite determined to have the thing he wishes accom-

* "The Eighteenth Century."

plished at any expense whatever. This is very different from the average frame of mind, which does not want anything daring done, and thinks that if things are not going well they at any rate could not be got to go better. A letter of John Boyle O'Reilly's is so good a description of the average frame of mind that we may adopt it as the norm by which to determine those who belong to the average multitude. "I am no cynic, dear old man;" the letter reads, "but the world is telling on me. For I am beginning to be ashamed of enthusiasm; and it is dawning on me, like a bleak coast coming out of a mist on a gray day in the fall, that the glorious hopes and beliefs were delusions; that the world is hard and mean and censorious and unchangeable; that unless you live for appearance' sake and become a practical snob (for you are judged and valued by your own label, and those who live by the heart have no label, only a tag) you will be set down as a fool, and avoided by all the precise and safe and successful people." * None of the precise and safe and successful people want to venture anything for progress. They prefer to leave progress to God, or to evolution—another practical abstraction that lets them out of personal responsibility and effort. The majority of precise and safe and successful people do not care to raise the pressure on the unsuccessful crowd from whom they filch their success. The earth is always full-peopled with majorities of this quality, "hard and mean and censorious and unchangeable" persons if ever you propose progress to them, tho affable in social and religious connections and sacrificing themselves for their wives and children whom they wish to lift in the social scale and endow. The task before the lover of progress is to surprise these hard and unchangeable persons out of their meanness and censoriousness and contracted devotion to the social consequence of their wives and daughters, into actions that tend to the general good; or, if he cannot get this unchangeable class to lend a hand at general improvement, to find means to accomplish progress despite their opposition and disdain. It is plain that this task is not an easy one and that those who set their affections on progress must have determination of the finest temper and inextinguishable enthusiasm.

The man of average mental frame, if he became so far alive that he

* George Parsons Lathrop, in *The Independent*, Nov. 6, 1890.

felt a leisure-hour interest in the cause of good, would quickly abandon it for innocuous silence when he found the other precise and safe and successful people ill-disposed to his nascent enthusiasm. He has particular stomach to get what delectation he can of the passing hour without the thought to improve it. He is affrighted of the fray when the outposts of the difficulties appear to him. Strenuous action was the whole orbit more than he bargained for. What he lightly dreamed of was a dress-parade diversion,—as many a now scarred veteran went to the late war for a few weeks' escapade;—but with the first smoke this brave warrior for ideas skipped the ranks. He did not calculate on the elevated eyebrows of his intimates,—this was too much. And like this man the most of our moderns are. Shallow, self-satisfied, doing what others do, thinking old, dilapidated thoughts, with a premonition that life can grow and be glorified, void of trust in man's capacity to recreate his conduct and customs at inclination.

Imagine relying on these precious people for disinterested enterprise! Imagine believing in their Sunday declamations of virtue! They have not the metal in them to introduce a new life; they have it not in their blood to perceive the vast gains of a new life or even to be tolerant of those who, from their amazement before the glory of living there is to be, would conquer these gains by their own labors.

Therefore, over against this ill-disposed class of fat and impenetrable minds, there must be some who say with the prescience and assurance of the sun's warmth in May, a new life shall arise. It is the condition of progress. The many wait and oppose, a few press beyond the barriers and bear down opposition and initiate. They are men of such central resolution that no mental rigidity, no resistance of selfishness, of masonry, of cannon, of the rope, can prevent their implantation of the germinant spiritual realities.

The new thought has had slow development because of the heaven-failing indecision and prudence and timidity of those entrusted with it. They entreat that we may gradually educate, and time will perform the rest;—time, god, evolution. Alas not to see that we are time, god, evolution! Had St. Paul and the apostles appealed to this trinity and let their own incomparable energy sleep, where were the world now? They believed in Christ, in god, the God that lay coiled in their own prodigious capacity

to act. The Christ of whom they learned was not a rambling incoherent dreamer, but one of so masterful comprehension that the irrelevancies and mere dressing of a case fell away when his mind enveloped it and his swift moving thought and perfect will left no chasm between conception and deed. His might lay in the directness and concentration of his nature. His will became the axis of the moral world, so firm-fixed was it in comparison with the shifting irresolutions of other men. And touched with this spirit his followers compassed the earth with superhuman joy and success, the inalienable property of those with unfailing will.

These people might have believed in their thought to a less degree, and said, If we go on proclaiming the things we have inwardly seen and felt there will be struggles and turmoil; let us therefore quench the flame that burns in us. What had then become of the world? Wisely they divulged their revolutionary visions. It was not their affair if the world were rent a thousand ways by them. They announced with the earnestness that we know to have been invincible, the coming of a new heaven and a new earth, the passing away of old things—and so they have passed away. Persons of less depth would have tempered their expressions, saying, 'It would be well if old things could pass away,' but such would have made no indentation on the hard finish of the Roman world. Jesus truly did not say, *revolt*, but he said, 'Change ye your hearts,' and change of heart carried revolutions and alterations of the earth engendered within it. No changed heart could have suffered the old world to survive as it was, and had the old world survived there could have been no changed hearts in the deep Christian sense. And in reality it was a question of depth. Nothing partial sufficed the founder of the new life because the partial has shallow and perishable foundations. Depth only can awaken depth, and Jesus, by descending to the last basis of right and ordaining absolute justice and absolute progress of man, made his work and his method everlasting and eternal. Had he availed himself of partial principles to gain temporary results, he would have been like modern reformers, the apostles of science and culture, and his name must soon have disappeared.

The unique feature of the highest type of reformers, of whom Jesus was one, is that they do not pause sated and complacent at any measured quantity of valiant achievement, but propound absolute and all-inclusive

demands. The successful and decent proprietors of land and sky, strung by rudimentary consciences, or the fear of the wrath to come, or the knowledge that the one-time solid soil of unearned privilege is sinking under their feet, offer concessions: "Leave us on our caste pinnacle and we will contribute generously to God; we will write his name imperishably in the architecture of our temples, that he may wanton in this beauty and forget the poor outside. Say nothing about the tenement houses from which we derive our rents and we will subscribe salvation to the Arabians. Look not into our factories nor digress from the beaten way heavenward by prating of wages, and we will see that these factory outcasts have reading-rooms, dance-halls, sections of Y. M. C. A., and a christmas present." Many a lover of the stars is tricked by these decent people. It is good to eat at broad boards 'mid shining silver and gold, good to hear the sparkling words of elegant sympathy and philanthropy, and to sip the ambrosial wines that are had from the marrow of an hundred factory families. And when the moral reformer is invited here he feels that God indeed is with him and has set a seal of triumph on his work. How can blinded iconoclasts proclaim against such loveliness of character as here abounds! Rude, course, harsh persons these mistyled 'improvers' must be to foam against the transparent humanity of these resplendent souls. So it is the clear-browed, heaven-sealing youth, oracle and expectation of the trampled millions, succumbs to the soothing spell of palaces and bullion and becomes an apologist for silken, plausible tyranny. His heart is changed; a new light is born upon his soul. The client of gold-fed culture perceives now the injustice done against the rich and will mitigate its flagrance. He will bring the classes together by the sweet compulsion of amalgamating love, christian love, cosmic love, lighting his torch at the furnace of imperishable love seething in rich hearts, discovered by himself, unaccountably hidden from several billion contemporary mortals not yet invited to sip soup and chat in the immaculate circle of these irradiating angels. Could there be a more god-like occupation than interpreting the effulgent goodness of the rich to the darkened understandings of the poor? or a more heavenly harbinger of perfect unison of classes and masses than his own alliance with some high bred daughter of fortune to share with him the complicated and appalling undertakings of social regeneration?

Steinhoff is one of Ibsen's reformers, who founds a young men's League and announces that "the money-bag has ceased to reign here." He turns his weapons against the "honorable and capable" men of the community. One of them invites him to dinner. "Fine furniture, piano, flowers and rare plants" are there. "What the devil could I do?" asks the reformer. "I could not offend such decent people."

Apologists of the defamed rich preach that reformers who cut themselves off from the rich are guilty of the grossest folly. The rich are the source of supplies, I have heard a complaisant professor drawing a drowsy salary say. The arm of the Lord must be upheld. All movements for good require 'sinews of war,' and who will supply them if not the rich? Since the power is in the pockets of the rich we must not antagonize their pockets. The budding good in the rich should not be discouraged. The rich are probably tormented by ignorance (not selfishness) and we ought to be good enough to enlighten them, good enough if necessary to endeavor to soften their hearts with the ulterior purpose of loosening their purse-strings and promoting the growth of excellent works.

Not to cut yourself off from the rich in these days is to capitulate and lose the game. To work with the rich is to surrender to the enemy. For riches love not justice and equity and the rich love not justice, and long have they bought of the powers of sunny youth a respite from the judgment that hangs by a thread above them.

And when will mighty youth cease to sell itself? All power belongs to early springing manhood: the earth and its fullness, and the calm ennobling night. As long ago as the seven and thirtieth year of this century Mr. Emerson spoke sorrowfully to an audience of selected Americans of the evil fate which hid from American youths their incompatible power. "Young men," said he, "of the fairest promise, who begin life upon our shores, inflated by the mountain winds, shined upon by all the stars of God, find the earth below not in unison with these, but are hindered from action by the disgust which the principles on which business is managed inspire, and turn drudges, or die of disgust, some of them suicides. What is the remedy? They did not yet see, and thousands of young men as hopeful now crowding to the barriers for the career do not yet see, that if the single man plant himself indomitably on his instincts, and there abide, the

huge world will come round to him. Patience,—patience; with the shades of all the good and great for company; and for solace the perspective of your own infinite life; and for work the study and the communication of principles, the making those instincts prevalent, the conversion of the world.”* And still after fifty-three years, “public and private avarice make the air we breathe thick and fat;” Still “the scholar is decent, indolent, complaisant.”

The prophecy of Emerson may be realized now. The young may decline to enter the active occupations of life on the old terms. I know a young man whose apparent business is groceries; but he is much more than this, as every dealer in salt and flour might be. His leisure hours are spent studying the lives of his humbler fellowmen and revolving plans to exalt their lives. He visits the poor, eats with them, knows them as Jesus knew the lowly, and says “I am getting my political economy and my religion from the poor.” Him I honor. I compare him with the political economists who constitute the American Academy of Political and Social Science, “nearly all the prominent writers and thinkers in the economic and political field in this country and many foreign scholars,” the announcement certifies, who issue several considerable volumes of economic reflections yearly, and I say this young economist who labors with his hands nine tenths of the day is on higher ground than all the Academy. The mere fact that he works with his hands places him immeasurably above them, on ground that they cannot reach until they work with their hands. But an Academist working with his hands is at present unthinkable. Hereafter there can be no real political economist who does not work with his hands. Very significant words are those of a recent reviewer; “‘The reason why so few good books are written,’ said the late Walter Bagehot, ‘is that so few people who can write, know anything;’ and by this he meant that the literary class, leading a retired existence, has little experience of life in its broader aspects.” I recall the majority of economists that I have known and the memory chills me; I cannot but pity the young mind over which they gain ascendancy. They are barren and they make the student lives of those that believe in them barren. But here is an ob-

* *The American Scholar.*

server who is living and feeling, and going to the fountain head of economics, the daily lives of men.

Inspiration does not today come from those who are set apart and surrounded with privileges in order that they may render us back the highest inspiration and the wisest suggestion, but from the man who rises from the soil of common actual life, obedient to his instincts, trusting his feelings and genius.

I know a Christian minister* of such unwonted sensitiveness to the mandates of the Eternal, that he has gone forth from comfort and the decent crowd to make his home among the poorest and become the introducer of an order of social right. The great carnal world whose last flowers are Ward McAllister and John Wanamaker announce concerning men who like him go out of the lazy ranks to fight alone, that their influence is now justly dead and the estimable world will hear of them no more. I tell you the most dangerous foe the world has is just this man. Let the carnal society of our day look to its very self-preservation when there is even one such between the borders of the two seas.

A young writer of uncommon promise, Miss Jessie Genevieve Tuckerman, says in her brief description of “A Revival of Religion,” “Imagine a thousand souls pledging themselves to follow the life of Christ in the widest sense. Only a thousand among so many millions of people, but a heaven that would set the nation heaving. Think of the necessities such vows would impose upon you and me. What social customs must we not disregard, what opinions must we not dare, what contempt and ridicule could we escape!”

What means such writing as this? It is the declaration of independence of the younger minds of our day. It informs that the subordination of their spirits to those who but respect and repeat the habitual practices of the world is finished. They will go to church, but only to return sorrowing that the pulpit has no longer ought to teach them; they will go to college but only to learn that in this western empire with all the illustrious traditions of Aryan enterprise and expansion a wasting conformity may be taught; and they will go out to order their lives as their own reasons bid, the enemies and outcasts of their kind if the need is, but free, free.

* Mr. E. P. Foster, of Cincinnati.

Already the new life is ours when these souls breathe. You may take away their houses and lands and you have given them deliverance from a burden whose engrossing care robs them of energy to live; you may deprive them of support and they are glad for it throws them the more upon the rugged and fruitful realities and shows them channels to the heart of truth they had not explored; you may strip them of friends, and this too is good for the friendly universe is within them, vast and companionable, and nobler spiritual kindred, scaling new glories for the race by the might of of invincible rectitude, wait to welcome them.

It matters no longer if the massive world goes its accustomed course impatient of the handful who have set themselves to stay and change it. The power is with the few. The death of the old order is declared.

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TITLE**